

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07
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R 102130Z AUG 77
FM AMEMBASSY QUITO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5354
INFO AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
AMEMBASSY LIMA
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL

C O N F I D E N T I A L QUITO 5359

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT EC
SUBJ: PLAZA CITES ECUADOR AS CONTINENTAL MODEL IN MOVE TOWARD
DEMOCRACY

1. IN AN AUGUST 8 SPEECH DEALING WITH THE PROCESS OF RETURNING
TO CONSTITUTIONAL RULE, GALO PLAZA LASSO, EX-PRESIDENT AND
CHIEF OF THE SUPREME ELECTORAL TRIBUNAL, TOUCHED ON THE THEME
OF THE INTERNATIONAL IMPACT OF THE ECUADOREAN EXPERIMENT.
PLAZA SAID THAT THE MAJORITY OF SOUTH AMERICAN COUNTRIES UNDER
DE FACTO RULE ARE NOW DETERMINED TO HOLD FREE ELECTIONS AT SOME
FUTURE TIME. THROUGH HIS PERSONAL CONTACTS, HE CONTINUED, HE
HAD LEARNED THAT THSE COUNTRIES HAD DETAILED COMMITTEES TO
FOLLOW THE ECUADOREAN DEVELOPMENT CLOSELY. HE ALSO POINTED
TO A LETTER HE HAD RECEIVED FROM ROSLYNN CARTER ACKNOWLEDGING
THE SIGNIFICANCE TO ALL OF AMERICA OF THE ECUADOREAN TRANSITION
PROCESS. PLAZA ARGUED THAT THE FACT SO MANY OTHER COUNTRIES
WERE AWAITING THE RESULTS IN ECUADOR MADE THE FULFILLMENT
OF THE PROCESS EVEN MORE IMPORTANT.

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2. COMMENT: THE SCARCELY CONCEALED CONCEIT THAT ECUADOR
WILL HAVE A PIVOTAL ROLE IN A GENERAL SWING TOWARD DEMOCRACY
IN LATIN AMERICA IS GROWING AMONG DOMESTIC CIVIC LEADERS AS
RETURN TO CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT LOOMS MORE IMMIENT. IN
ADDITION TO PLAZA'S REMARKS ABOUT COMMITTEES BEING SET UP IN
NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES TO STUDY THE ECUADOREAN MODEL, PRESIDENT
POVEDA ALSO REMARKED PRIVATELY A FEW MONTHS AGO THAT A FELLOW

DE FACTO CHIEF OF STATE HAD TOLD HIM THAT ECUADOR'S DECISION HAD CREATED PRESSURE IN HIS OWN COUNTRY AND HAD COMPELLED HIM TO MAKE A STATEMENT PROMISING A RETURN TO CONSTITUTIONALITY WITHIN A FEW YEARS (POVEDA DECLINED TO NAME HIS CORRESPONDENT, BUT CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE AT THE TIME SEEMED TO POINT TOWARD LA PAZ).

3. HOW MUCH VALIDITY THERE IS TO THE THEORY OF A DEMONSTRATION EFFECT IS FAIRLY OPEN TO QUESTION SINCE THE OERWHELMINGLY IMPORTANT FACTOR IN MOVING A COUNTRY TOWARD THIS POLITICAL SYSTEM OR THAT WOULD BE ITS OWN DOMESTIC SITUATION AND NOT THE EXAMPLE OF ITS NEIGHBORS. ON THE OTHER HADN, WE HAVE MARVELLED AT THE IMPACT THAT THE SPANISH ELECTIONS HAVE HAD LOCALLY, AND ALTHOUGH WE CANNOT QUANTIFY IT, WE SUSPECT THAT IT HAS HAD A NOT INSIGNIFICANT INFLUENCE IN ENCOURAGING ECUADOR FURTHER TOWARD DEMOCRACY. SIMILARLY, MOMENTUM TOWARDS DEMOCRACY IS NOTABLE IN SOUTH AMERICA, AND WHILE MANY FACTORS ARE INVOLVED, ECUADOR'S ROLE AT THE LEADING EDGE OF THE PENDULUM CANNOT BE GAINSAID.

BLOOMFIELD

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